

## OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

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## DIOCESE OF GRAND FALLS

### First Sunday of Lent, 2024

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

The Season of Lent is a time for discovery and rediscovery. The very first thing we hear as a new Lenten Season begins is: “Turn away from sin and be faithful to the Gospel”. This ‘turning’ has a literal meaning: ie. go in a different direction, change course, you are headed into danger – turn around.



But there is a spiritual meaning as well. Originally the time of Lent was a time of preparation by adults for Baptism– a time of retreat and reflection – a time to turn from their non-Christlike ways and embrace their new life in Christ. Now the Church is asking us to use this sacred time of Lent as a time for personal reflection.

Every one of us can benefit from a time of ‘turning’ and looking back over the past year with the intention of seeing where and how God has been present and active in our lives. During the last year, each of us has lived through good times: times of celebration of milestones like birthdays and anniversaries; times of unexpected surprises like new friendship and new relationships; times of overcoming illness or setback; and times of personal success.

Likewise, there have been difficult times: times of loss of family members and friends in death; times of great disappointment and hardship; times of life-changing news or diagnoses; times of betrayal and times of personal regret.

Lent gives us the opportunity to look back over all these times not just as a snapshot of the past but rather, as moments of Sanctifying Grace by asking the questions: “Where has God been present?” and “How, did I feel God’s presence?” and “In what way did God’s presence make a difference in my life?”.

I encourage all of us to take up this 'spiritual exercise' which is a blessing for the past, present, and future.

Oftentimes, it is only by looking back that we see what we may have missed. But whether in the moment or in reflection, we are reminded that God loves us deeply and will never abandon us.

Discovering how God has been present in our past year, gives us insight into the mysterious and hidden ways God is present now and can inspire us to look deeper for God's caring presence today.



Rediscovering the abiding presence of God in our past and discovering the ever-loving presence of God in our present, gives us hope and confidence of a future filled with the guidance, support, and protection of God's presence.

May God our Father, who never left the side of Jesus his Son, be with you now and forever.

In Christ

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "R. Anthony Daniels". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a small cross symbol at the beginning.

Most Reverend R. Anthony Daniels  
Bishop of Grand Falls